

HOW WE SERVE:
AN EXAMINATION OF FAITH-BASED FOOD PANTRIES
DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

A Practical Research Project
Presented to
The Faculty of
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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
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has been presented to and accepted by
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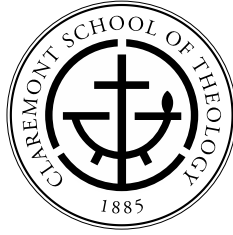
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ABSTRACT

HOW WE SERVE: AN EXAMINATION OF FAITH-BASED FOOD PANTRIES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

by

Louise Sloan Goben

Communities have come to rely on local food pantries and networks of food banks that partner with government programs and local businesses to provide resources for people experiencing food insecurity. The 2020 proposed Federal budget called for significant cuts to programs like Meals on Wheels, SNAP, and WIC. As a result, some pantries were preparing for an increase in the number of clients due to budget changes. However, there was little preparation that could have anticipated the rapid descension of food insecurity in communities as a result of COVID-19 virus in March of 2020, and the State of California's mandate for people to remain "safer-at-home."

Some pantries were able to quickly respond to the increased need while others closed their doors. The author sought to understand the attributes of pantries that were able to effectively respond to the sudden increased need for food assistance. This project identifies twelve food pantries in the San Fernando Valley and the Los Angeles area that were able to make quick adjustments with regard to their volunteer base, sources of funding, acquisition of food, and changes they were required to make in their distribution of food as they safely continued to serve their neighbors. Questions were asked related to the history, mission, and organization of each pantry, and number of clients served. An additional set of questions were asked about what changes needed to be made specifically in response to the pandemic.

Ronald Heifetz identifies specific principles of adaptive leadership that are essential for businesses and nonprofits to successfully navigate challenges and thrive. These principles include possessing a clear sense of values and mission; taking the best practices of the past and making changes based on what works well, and what no longer serves; benefiting from experimentation and being able to improvise; creating new arrangements that allow for creativity and diversity; and, understanding that adaptation takes time and patience. Many of the food pantries examined in this paper have been able to meet the principles laid out by Heifetz in their structure and organization. Other pantries faced closure as they were unable to make important adaptive changes.

Heifetz's Adaptive Leadership paradigm is a valuable resource that may be used to evaluate and organize or reorganize nonprofits like local food pantries. It is imperative that compassionate ministries such as faith-based food pantries or services provided to those experiencing homelessness remain flexible and dynamic, able to quickly re-orient during times of sudden crisis, and importantly, remain firmly grounded in a sense of mission and values.

Chapter One

Introduction

Communities have come to rely on local food pantries and networks of food banks that partner with government programs and local businesses to provide resources for the food insecure. Many federal, state, and local government agencies have considered religious organizations to be partners in serving at-risk people on a local level. During the early 1980s there was a dramatic cut in funding for programs such as Food Stamps, now SNAP, or Cal-Fresh in the state of California. Many local, faith-based food pantries were established in response to the need to assist their neighbors.

A recent proposed Federal budget calls for significant cuts to programs like Meals on Wheels, SNAP, and WIC.¹ As a result some pantries were preparing for an increase in the number of clients due to budget changes. Still, there was little preparation that could have anticipated the rapid descension of food insecurity in communities as a result of COVID-19 virus in March of 2020. In the San Fernando Valley, large numbers of people suddenly found themselves unable to work due to the Governor's "safer-at-home" policies. Food supply chains were impacted, and many products were suddenly unavailable at local grocery stores. Many people who were on the edge of food insecurity reached a tipping-point. Nearly overnight, local food pantries were inundated with more consumers while they too faced shortages of products.

¹ "Presidents' 2021 budget would cut food assistance for millions and radically restructure SNAP," Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, accessed February 18, 2020, <https://cbpp.org/research/food-assistance>.

Some pantries were able to quickly respond to the increased need while others closed their doors. This was not unique to Southern California. “At the start of the pandemic in late March, eleven of [Milwaukee’s] 47 food pantries closed due to a lack of capacity....”²

My question is, what are the characteristics of food pantries that were able to successfully respond to the food crisis during the pandemic? I have actively sought to learn the ways twelve local food pantries in the San Fernando Valley were able to make quick adjustments with regard to their volunteer base, their sources of funding, acquisition of food, and changes they were required to make in their distribution of food as they safely continued to serve their neighbors.

Chapter 2 describes the impact of the COVID-19 “safer-at-home” policies on food insecurity in the San Fernando Valley. The pandemic forced the temporary closure of many businesses and there was a marked increase in unemployment within communities that were already facing high unemployment and under-employment. At the same time, there were fewer resources available for local pantries as supply chains had been interrupted. These factors had significant impact on local food pantries, many of them operated by local faith-based and nonprofit organizations.

Chapter 3 will describe the principles of Adaptive Leadership which were designed to help businesses and nonprofits identify and adapt to change. “Adaptive leadership is the practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive,” writes Ronald Heifetz.³ Heifetz notes that many organizations find themselves in increasingly shifting circumstances and it is important for such organizations to address questions of value, purpose, and process in order to thrive.

² Rob Meiksins and Sofia Jaren, “Nonprofit food banks and pantries alter program models to respond to COVID,” *Nonprofit Quarterly*, May 12, 2020, <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/nonprofit-food-banks-and-pantries-alter-program-models-to-respond-to-covid/>.

³ Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, and Marty Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press, 2009), 14.

Research for the project involved either direct visitations to, or phone interviews with twelve food pantry Directors that serve the San Fernando Valley. Each of these pantries have been able to continue to serve their communities. Chapter 4 will include a report on each of these pantries as they made quick adaptations in light of the pandemic and the sudden shifts it caused.

Chapter 5 will use the principles outlined by Heifetz to describe the strategies these pantries used to continue their work. As pantries sought to meet a rapid increase in number of clients, they improvised and diversified food sources, volunteer bases, sources of funding, warehousing of food, and distribution models. All of this was done as they sought to maintain the health and safety of clients and volunteers.

My research is shaped throughout by my ministry context from the North Hollywood Interfaith Food Pantry (NHIFP) where I currently I serve as the Chair of the Executive Board. The last year has been challenging as the Pantry has learned how important it is to be able to be responsive in a crisis. Research includes a range of pantries from the very large to the very small. Strategies were identified that will enable the NHIFP to expand food offerings as well as to prepare for an extended period of high unemployment and food insecurity in the community. My hope that this information will be of assistance to other community food pantries.

Chapter 2

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Food Pantries

Much of our country and all of California is living in the throes of the second wave of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Since March 16, 2020 residents of Southern California have been asked to observe “safer-at-home” restrictions for living and working. Restaurants, movie theaters, hotels, shopping malls, barbershops, churches, and other religious gatherings have all been closed. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, only essential businesses are to remain open.

Essential businesses are those that provide food, shelter, social services and homeless services, and other necessities of life for economically disadvantaged or otherwise needy individuals; fresh and non-perishable food retailers (including convenience stores); pharmacies; childcare facilities; gas stations; banks; laundry businesses and services necessary for maintaining the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of a residence.⁴

Employment

Immediately following the beginning of the pandemic and the closing of businesses, many people found themselves out of work. Some people were fortunate enough to be able to work from home while other people’s jobs simply vanished. Many people were already living balanced on a razor-thin edge of being able to provide for their families. Now they found themselves without resources to earn money for rent, food, and other necessities.

“According to Pew Research the COVID-19 outbreak and the economic downturn it engendered swelled the ranks of unemployed Americans by more than 14 million, from 6.2

⁴ “Health Officer Orders County Residents to Shelter in Place,” County of Sonoma, accessed August 26, 2020, <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov>.

million in February to 20.5 million in in May 2020.”⁵ The official U.S. unemployment rate reached 16%. This was significantly higher than the increase due to the Great Recession which lasted from December 2007 to June 2009. The unemployment peaked at 10.6% in January 2010. The same Pew report states that the COVID-19 recession is more comparable to the Great Depression of the 1930s, when unemployment is estimated to have reached 25%.

In April of 2020 Los Angeles County released an unemployment figure of 20.3%.⁶ Hardest hit at the beginning of the pandemic were the areas of leisure and hospitality which were down 195,000 jobs. These areas include food services and restaurants. This unemployment figure marks the highest level of job losses in 22 years and accounted for 25% of all job losses in L.A. County. Also impacted were trade, retail businesses, transportation, and utilities which saw a loss of 133,600 jobs. Education and health services which includes social services, lost 93,000 jobs.

Many of these job losses impacted communities that were already on the edge of food insecurity, including people of color, women, and single-parent families. Women are often employed in the leisure and hospitality sector, and in education. Latino women had the highest rate of unemployment in May at 19.5%. Of the approximate 1.8 million residents of the San Fernando Valley the population is 42% Hispanic and 40% white. Other races account for just 18 % of the residents. And women constitute 51% of the population.⁷

Not all jobs lost were in marginalized communities. Also notable in Southern California is the number of high-paying jobs that have been lost among those in the film and

⁵ “Unemployment rose higher in three months of COVID-19 than it did in two years of the Great Recession,” Pew Research, accessed May 20, 2020, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/06/11/unemployment-rose-higher-in-three-months-of-covid-19-than-it-did-in-two-years-of-the-great-recession/>.

⁶ “April jobs numbers released for LA County: 20% unemployment,” Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation, accessed August 26, 2020, <https://laedc.org/2020/05/22/april-jobs-numbers-released-for-la-county-20-unemployment/>.

⁷ Census Report, San Fernando Valley CCD, Los Angeles County, CA. Censusreporter.org, accessed January 20, 2021, <https://censusreporter.org/search/?q=San+Fernando+Valley+CCD%2C+Los+Angeles+County%2C+CA>.

television industry as the coronavirus closed all production. The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors announced that as of June, among the 890,000 jobs created by the entertainment industry most were lost due to shut down.⁸ The shuttering of productions involves more than actors, crews, and writers. The ripple effect of this is enormous. In Los Angeles there are many in the catering business who rely on location shooting as they provide meals for actors and crews.

Food Supply Chains

According to an article appearing the *Los Angeles Times*, with closures due to the pandemic:

In less time than it takes a farmer to plant and harvest a head of lettuce, the nation's entire food industry has been flipped on its head by the COVID-19 pandemic. An intricate system for matching supply with demand established over decades has been thrown out of whack just as unemployment and food insecurity are skyrocketing among families.⁹

Especially hard hit was California where an estimated one-third of the country's vegetables and two-thirds of fruits and nuts are grown. The food service industry supplies markets, restaurants, bars, schools, hospitals, hotels, cruise lines, production studios, and other catering services. As most of these businesses were forced to close in March 2020, the pandemic had an immediate impact on the growers and the shipping industry. Crops had been planted months before in anticipation of the demand. With the closing of many businesses,

⁸ Chris Gardner, "Entertainment industry has lost 'many' of its 890,00 jobs during COVID-19 pandemic, L.A. Official says," *Hollywood Reporter*, May 20, 2020, <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/entertainment-industry-has-lost-890000-jobs-covid-19-pandemic-la-official-says-1295373>.

⁹ Kevin Rector, "Rotting food. Hungry masses. Chaotic supply chains. Coronavirus upends the U.S. food system." *Los Angeles Times*, May 5, 2020, <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-05-05/coronavirus-food-supply-chain-makers-distributors-retailers>.

farmers and ranchers had no market for their goods. Billions of dollars of food went to waste, and some was plowed back into the soil in which it had been grown.

Dairy Farmers of America estimated that farmers were dumping as much as 3.7 million gallons of milk each day, and chicken ranchers were smashing 750,000 eggs a week.¹⁰ Food distributors lost 60-90% of their volume overnight. While the demand for food shot up in retail grocery stores as shoppers began to over-buy, it could not make up for the lost demand from restaurants, hotels, and caterers.

Grocers were also at a loss to maintain well-stocked shelves. Customers were purchasing faster than retailers could restock. People were buying four to eight weeks' worth of food at a time. With the disruption on the shipping industry, there were not enough trucks to handle the high demand. Sometimes orders just didn't show up.¹¹

Food Banks and Food Pantries

The pandemic has impacted food banks and local food pantries at several points including food sourcing, increased demand for food, and the loss of a volunteer base to distribute food.

There is a distinction between food banks and food pantries. Food banks do not serve the public directly from their distribution centers, but rather they serve as a collection site and warehouse for food and other products that will be distributed via independent community food pantries. Food banks often receive surplus food from farmers, ranchers, and other producers of food products which will include fresh produce, milk, eggs, and dry goods. Food pantries affiliate with these large banks and receive products at low cost or for free, which they in turn distribute locally.

¹⁰ Rose Marie Cromwell, "Dumped milk, smashed eggs, plowed vegetables: food waste of the pandemic," *New York Times*, April 11, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/11/business/coronavirus-destroying-food.html>.

¹¹ Rector, "Rotting Food."

Food Sourcing

Food waste has long been a challenge in the United States. The USDA estimates that approximately 30 to 40% of food that is produced is wasted at the retail and consumer levels.¹² This has far-reaching impact during the best of times. During a pandemic food waste becomes devastating and food pantries have greater difficulties to keep their shelves stocked with non-perishable items and fresh products.

One organization that seeks to address food waste is Food Forward. Headquartered in North Hollywood, California, Food Forward was established to rescue surplus produce from people's yards, farmer's markets, and wholesale produce markets. In their report in the early weeks of the pandemic, they wrote:

The COVID-19 pandemic and related economic downturn have created a “seismic” disruption in the food industry resulting in a paradox of a phenomenal amount of food waste and unprecedented demand on food banks. Farmers are turning their vegetables into mulch and dumping millions of gallons of milk while more people than ever line up at food pantries across the country. Food waste is not new to the food industry as up to 40% of the food we grow in America is never eaten. However, the worsening issue of food waste due to the pandemic has illuminated the flaws present in our food supply chains. The amount of people across the globe experiencing acute hunger could double by the end of this year, while farmers and producers deal with massive surpluses.¹³

¹² “Food Waste FAQs. How much food waste is there in the United States?” United States Department of Agriculture, accessed January 10, 2020, <https://usda.gov/foodwaste/faqs>.

¹³ “How has COVID-19 impacted food waste?” Food Forward, accessed May 15, 2020, <https://foodforward.org/food-waste/how-has-covid-19-affected-food-wastei>.

Food forward organizes teams of licensed and bonded volunteers to pick fruit trees in communities. In Southern California there are many people who have citrus and avocado trees, peach and apricot trees, and other food producing plants that are allowed to just drop ripened fruit. They are never harvested. Volunteers from Food Forward pick ripened fruit and local pantries are given this produce. They also collect unsold food from farmer's markets to distribute. Because this organization relies on a volunteer base, this source of fresh produce was lost to local pantries as people were asked to remain "safer-at-home."

Added to the sudden economic shifts and disruption of food supply chains across our communities is the business of being able to acquire basic items needed for safety and nutrition. According to the non-profit Feeding America, the earliest stages of the pandemic were marked by "...panic buying to stock up on food staples and other supplies, including toilet paper, hand sanitizer and cleaning supplies."¹⁴ Low-income individuals are at a disadvantage as they seek to simply have enough on their tables to meet the needs for the day, let alone to shop for purchases that would prepare them for an extended period of quarantine.

Many wholesalers who provided dry goods to locally operated food distribution sites were unable to meet the increased demand for smaller packaged items. Restaurant supply wholesalers had a surplus of bulk or large packaged items which are difficult to pack into boxes or shopping bags to distribute to families. Examples of this might include a 20-pound bag of rice, or 3 quarts of tomato sauce in a No. 10 can. Also in short supply were items like fresh food products as potato farmers or dairy ranchers were unable to get their products to market. As already mentioned, often dairy and egg products were simply being destroyed.

¹⁴ "The impact of the coronavirus on food insecurity," Feeding America, accessed May 1, 2020, <https://www.feedingamerica.org/research/coronavirus-hunger-research#:~:text=The%20Impact%20of%20the%20Coronavirus%20on%20Food%20INSECURITY%20IN%2020.>

Increased Demand for Food

According to the organization Feeding America, four out of five food banks are seeing more people than they did the previous year.¹⁵ Approximately 10 million people live in Los Angeles County, and about 26% of households in the county are experiencing food insecurity.¹⁶ Food insecurity is defined as “the absence of sufficient food for a healthy and active lifestyle for all household members and existing food that does not meet nutritional requirements.”¹⁷ Well before the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, the San Fernando Valley had a large number of families and individuals who were experiencing food insecurity. The sudden closure of many businesses and subsequent job loss has led to a dramatic increase for the services offered by local food banks and food pantries.

The Los Angeles Regional Food Bank reported that it was receiving requests for double the amount of food it had been giving away prior to the pandemic.¹⁸ Some local food pantries were reporting that the number of bags of food they were giving away increased from 300 to 3,500 a week. The increased need for food also increased the demand made on space and storage of large amounts of canned products, refrigeration units to accommodate fresh foods, and the space needed for sorting, packing, and distributing food.

Decline in Volunteer Support

Many food banks and food pantries rely heavily on volunteer commitment. Stay at home orders were intended to slow the spread of the coronavirus and to protect those populations that were determined to be high risk for infection. These included people who are

¹⁵ “The food bank response to COVID, by the numbers,” Feeding America, accessed December 20, 2020, <https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-blog/food-bank-response-covid-numbers>.

¹⁶ Kayla de la Haye, “Americans aren’t getting enough to eat during the coronavirus pandemic – here’s what’s happening in Los Angeles County,” *US News*, December 16, 2020, <https://www.usnews.com/news/cities/articles/2020-12-23/americans-arent-getting-enough-to-eat-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic-heres-whats-happening-in-los-an>.

¹⁷ Michael Greenberg, Gwendolyn Greenberg, and Laruen Mezzo, “Food pantries, poverty, and social justice,” *American Journal of Public Health* 100, no. 11 (November 2010): doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2010.201848.

¹⁸ de la Haye, “Americans aren’t getting enough to eat during the coronavirus pandemic.”

over 65 years of age, the very people most available to volunteer to serve in local faith-based food pantries. Many pantries quickly lost their volunteer support and needed to scramble to locate younger people willing to step up to meet the demands of increased need. In Marin County, California it was reported that in March alone the San Francisco Food Bank had seen one-third of their volunteers drop out.¹⁹

Organizations such as Volunteer Match and Volunteer LA have been able to connect volunteers with organizations and food pantries that need assistance. Among the tasks that are needed is to help sort and organize donations, repack donated food items for distribution, and the actual distribution of food. Food banks and food pantries adapted how food was distributed and included CDC requirements for safe distancing, the wearing of face masks, and the use of protective gloves. Another major adaptation was to adopt very low contact methods of distribution like drive-thru loading of vehicles.

Most local food pantries were neither designed to cope with the sudden increase in clients nor for the length of time the pandemic has been extended. Some pantries were forced to close their doors. Others were able to adapt and respond to serve their communities.

¹⁹ “How to meet surging demand at food banks,” Volunteer Match, accessed November 15, 2020. <https://blogs.volunteermatch.org/how-to-meet-surging-demand-at-food-banks>.

Chapter 3

Ronald Heifetz and Adaptive Change

“Adaptive leadership is the practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive,” writes Ronald Heifetz.²⁰ For the many local food pantries bringing essentials for daily living to communities they serve, the ability to mobilize resources of food, volunteer support, and sourcing of funds became fundamental during the pandemic and resulting high unemployment. Some pantries were unable to continue their work. Yet, other pantries were able to make quick adjustments in operational procedures that allowed them to feed sometimes as many as ten-times the number of people within the space of a few weeks. Principles of Heifetz’s model of adaptive leadership can help us understand the qualities that enabled these service sites to respond to the crisis.

Based on principles of evolutionary biology, Heifetz recognizes that organisms must possess the capacity to adapt and change to environmental stresses that can literally threaten the existence of that organism. This capacity involves more than *coping*, rather it implies that the organism possesses basic morphing skills – the ability to rearrange or discard that which no longer serves the needs of the species while preserving characteristics essential for its continuation. New arrangements of DNA will enable a living system to flourish in the midst of an environment that becomes challenging or harsh. These new capacities allow the species to take the best from its history to grow and thrive for the future.

Businesses and nonprofits also need to possess the ability to utilize these same capacities to maintain relevance and to grow into the future. Change is inevitable and organizations will encounter shifts in leadership, products, consumers, financial systems, values, and other variables that may impact what they do and how they accomplish their

²⁰ Ronald Heifetz, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership* (Boston: Harvard Business Press, 2009), 14.

mission and vision. Some of these variables may be completely outside the control of organization while others may necessitate making planned adjustments.

According to Heifetz, equilibrium means stability. However, there are times when stability is not always desirable as this may lead to the inability of an organization to examine itself. Heifetz writes, “Without a general climate of urgency – the feeling that something must change – the society may do nothing until it is too late.”²¹ Learning to function within shifting patterns of stability and disequilibrium can strengthen and prepare organizations to make adjustments as they are needed under changing circumstances.

From an understanding of the principles of evolutionary biology and of business models, Adaptive Leadership suggests that organizations (and in the context of this paper, nonprofit organizations) will be best served by the following principles:

- 1) Possessing a clear sense of the purpose and values of the organization;
- 2) Taking the best practices of the past and making changes based on what is working well and considering what no longer serves;
- 3) Benefiting from being able to experiment and improvise;
- 4) Creating new arrangements that allow for creativity and diversity; and
- 5) Understanding that adaptation takes time and persistence.

Purpose and Values

It is important for a nonprofit to connect clearly to the purpose of the organization. This is the *raison d’être* of any business or agency, and it provides the basic DNA of the organism. The leaders of the venture must be able to clarify to both the members of the organization and to the consumers what it is they do and why it is important that they do it. The purpose or mission of the corporation will assist in clarifying the values that are espoused and guide the decision-making of all who are involved in the operation, as well as

²¹Ronald Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 35.

to offer clarity to those who may want to avail themselves of the services of the organization or invest in its future. To this end, Heifetz writes, “You make a statement about what you are willing to die for, and, therefore, what you are willing to live for.”²²

Once the mission vision and values of the enterprise have been established, all decisions, programs, commitments, and administrative decisions can be placed alongside of this vision to use as a plumbline for work that is done. People involved in making substantive decisions may ask the question, “How does this policy or decision help us connect to our purpose?” Heifetz refers to these as the orienting principles of the organization, and they should be used to provide both guidance and inspiration for the ongoing work of the nonprofit and corporation alike.

Best Practices/Considering Loss

Making change nearly always involves an experience of loss, and Heifetz argues that what many people often resist when circumstances force change are not the changes themselves, but the loss that may be experienced as a result. Therefore, when assessing adaptation, one needs to also consider what losses are at stake when changes are made. When staff members or constituents are resistant to change, it is a good idea determine what losses are being experienced. Losses may include a perceived lack of continuity, sense of community, loyalty, identity, loss of personal connection, or purpose. Addressing the experiences of individuals involved in the enterprise can assist them, as well as the whole organization, in identifying and moving through those losses to arrive at a new heart or a new vision.

While loss may be part of the conversation, conservation is part of the process. It is important to consider not only what changes may need to be made but also what the essential elements are that must be preserved so that this organization will continue to do its job well.

²² Heifetz, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*, 39.

These elements are referred to as core competencies; we may think of them as the DNA of the organism. An important question for an organization to ask is, “What elements are essential to our identity, history, and tradition that will enable this nonprofit to continue to do its work?” Then these elements will carry it into the future.

Both of these positions, what to keep and what to slough off, are essential to adaptive change. They require difficult but essential conversations, and they are to be conducted heartfully and sensitively to maximize the identity and competence of the operation.

Benefiting from Experimentation

When adaptive challenges arise, there is often no clear direction as to how to move forward. Simply seeking to understand the nature of the problem can be daunting and moving forward with solutions or remediation is helped when organizations are able to hold an experimental mindset. “You try things out, see what happens, and make changes accordingly.”²³

The process of experimentation opens organizations to learning. As challenges arise and responsive solutions are sought to remediate problems, a business that has the spirit of experimentation will be able to seek solutions without being married to the outcome. If one solution does not produce the results sought, it is important to be open to alternatives. Adaptive leadership models allow companies and decision-makers to be flexible and make corrections as needs arise.

On the other hand, a company or its leaders should not be wishy-washy about the decisions that are made. Once a course of action has been outlined leaders must be committed to follow-through, trusting that it is the right thing to do. At the same time, remaining open to the possibility that new and more effective solutions might still present themselves is

²³ Heifetz, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*, 36.

important. And it is always possible that the decisions that were made may have just been wrong to begin with and will need to be addressed.

In his book *Complex Adaptive Leadership*, Nick Obolensky refers to this as the paradox of leadership. It is when “...two opposites coexist, indicating a deeper, less obvious, hard to define yet powerful truth.”²⁴ The result of informed decision-making does not always present the optimal outcome and therefore maintaining an experimental mindset is helpful.

Creating New Arrangements

The ability to offer multiple responses to a variety of circumstances can enable an organization to respond to disequilibrium effectively, thereby allowing for flexibility and responsiveness during challenging times. Heifetz states that there are three major ways that organizations can manage periods of stress.

First, situations arise that are within the repertoire of the organization’s set of responses that enable the business or nonprofit to quickly restore a sense of equilibrium. These may take the forms of emergency plans that have been prepared in advance or that may arise naturally from time to time. The problem and the solution are ones that lie within the organization’s ability to offer quick responses. These are referred to as technical problems.

A second possibility is that an organization may not have a ready response to an urgent situation, but it is able to apply solutions out of the repertoire it possesses in order to make temporary shifts. This may restore balance for a time; however, it may simply point to the need for long-term solutions. If issues are not addressed, additional complications may arise in the future and thwart the existence of the business.

Third, an organization will need to learn to meet the new challenges. This is the place that learning and the ability to benefit from experimentation will best serve a nonprofit. As Heifetz states, social structures, businesses, and organizations need to be “...interested in

²⁴ Nick Obolensky, *Complex Adaptive Leadership* (New York: Routledge, 2014), xx.

knowing how to turn the second possibility into the third outcome.”²⁵ These are complex challenges and that are not necessarily well defined, and the solutions are not known in advance. This is referred to as an adaptive challenge, and it requires innovation and learning.

Adaptation Takes Time

This may be one of the most difficult challenges for organizational leadership, yet it is also key to understanding adaptation: it requires time and patience. Biological changes unfold in organisms or species over thousands or even millions of years. Change is incremental, but over time the capacity for change becomes part of the DNA of the next generation, and the generation that follows, as the evolutionary process unfolds. For a business or nonprofit, change occurs with much greater speed, yet it also takes time for new sets of norms to be fully integrated into the patterns of individuals and the organization itself. Therefore, change also requires persistence as new behaviors become established and the culture of the organization embraces experimentation and change.

Heifetz offers good insights with his comments on helping people to change.

Mobilizing people to meet their immediate adaptive challenges lies at the heart of leadership in the short term. Over time, these and other culture-shaping efforts build an organization’s adaptive capacity, fostering processes that will generate new norms that enable the organization to meet the ongoing stream of adaptive challenges posed by a world ever ready to offer new realities, opportunities, and pressures.²⁶

Many of the food pantries that have been serving the communities in which they are located have developed patterns of adaptation that have served them over time. As so many of these organizations were established and developed during times of economic challenge

²⁵ Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, 36.

²⁶ Heifetz, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*, 17.

serving communities that find themselves on the edge of chronic food insecurity, they have built into their organization the marks of adaptability and expansion.

The following chapter describes twelve faith-based bodies that distribute food to their communities. Using a survey of questions related to the operations of the pantry, number of clients served, hours of operation, how often clients may return, and other services the organization may provide in addition to food, this project seeks to understand what helps these pantries adapt in critical situations. Heifetz's principles as described earlier in this chapter may assist in understanding how these adaptations may benefit nonprofit food pantries.

Chapter 4

Project Description and Report on Food Pantries

Description of the Project

The aim of this project is to identify the characteristics of food pantries that have been able to thrive during the food crisis caused by the pandemic. Some pantries closed their doors while others are able to meet an increased need. All of the food pantries identified for this project are faith-based and vary in size.

An online search of food pantries located in the San Fernando Valley allows for the consumer to quickly identify many services that are offered. Some of these service points even have Yelp reviews!²⁷ Government resources are also useful in identifying locations where people can find food assistance, including both the City and the County of Los Angeles. Los Angeles County provides lists of food pantries under the heading of “COVID-19 Resources”²⁸ as well as under the banner of the North Los Angeles Regional Center, which offers resources for both the aging population and people with disabilities.²⁹ A major source of food and other supplies to pantries is the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank (LARFB). The website for the LARFB includes listings for food pantries that network with this agency.³⁰

Twelve pantries were identified for this project, and all but two are located in the San Fernando Valley. One pantry is in Hollywood and another in Los Angeles. Many of these

²⁷ “Yelp.com, “The 10 Best Food Banks in Los Angeles, CA.”

²⁸ LA County, “Food Bank Resource Guide.”

²⁹ “COVID-19 Resources,” North Los Angeles County Regional Center, accessed June 12, 2020, <https://www.nlacrc.org/about-us/advanced-components/search?q=food%20pantries>.

³⁰ “Food Bank Locator of the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank,” LA Food Bank, accessed June 12, 2020, www.lafoodbank.org/find-food/food-locator.

It is helpful to note the distinction between food banks and food pantries. Food Banks acquire and warehouse tons of food and other supplies that have been resourced through a variety of vendors. Food pantries receive food from food banks to conduct the distribution. Food pantries are usually community based and often do not pay for the food they receive from the food bank.

service sites are located in churches or other local houses of worship. Others own the facility in which they are located, and two of these are located in business districts. This is the list of the service providers contacted:

Burbank Temporary Aid Center, Burbank

Fetty Food Pantry, Church of the Valley, Van Nuys

Hollywood Food Coalition, Hollywood

Hope-NET, Los Angeles

Khalsa Care Foundation, Pacoima

Loaves and Fishes II, Catholic Charities, Van Nuys.

Lutheran Social Service Community Care Center, North Hollywood.

NoHo Home Alliance, North Hollywood

North Valley Caring Services, North Hills

SOVA Community Resource Program of the Jewish Family Services of the
Valley, Van Nuys

St Charles Borromeo Catholic Church, Holy Family Service Center, North
Hollywood

West Valley Food Pantry, Woodland Hills

Due to restrictions as a result of the coronavirus, some interviews were conducted by telephone while others were conducted on site as food was being distributed.

A list of questions was prepared to help gather relevant information. Questions asked were related to the operations of the pantry, number of clients served, hours of operation, how often clients may return, and other services the organization may provide in addition to offering food. This set of questions is referred to as Survey, Part A. A second set of questions was asked about changes the pantries needed to make as a result of the coronavirus, including changes in the client census, the procuring of food, warehousing and distribution of food, and

recruitment of volunteers (Survey, Part B). Both parts of this questionnaire used can be found in Appendix A of this paper. Information was received from websites, interviews with the directors of the organization, and personal visits. Appendix B includes the listing of each of the pantries and their hours of operation.

The information was compiled to see what commonalities there may be among the pantries that were able to continue their purpose of feeding of people in their communities. Some pantries needed to make significant changes, others made simple shifts, and some closed their doors. For those pantries that continued to offer food and increase the number of clients being served, I sought to understand what about the organization allowed them to thrive and to meet the increased requirements of services offered.

Part A of Pantry Survey

Many food pantries have their origins in the early to mid-1980s. They were established during a time of economic recession, dubbed “Reagan’s Recession” by the Pew Research Center.³¹ During this administration there was a dramatic cut in funding for programs such as Food Stamps (now SNAP, or Cal-Fresh in the state of California). Many local food pantries began to arise as a response to the task of serving local communities. A more recent (2020) proposed Federal budget calls for additional cuts to programs like Meals on Wheels, SNAP, and WIC.³² According to an article in the *Deseret Bee*, “The president’s budget proposal ...would slash nearly half a trillion dollars over the next 10 years from the three main pillars of the social safety net: Medicaid, federal housing assistance and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, better known as food stamps....”³³ In response,

³¹ “Reagan’s Recession,” Pew Research Center, accessed September 29, 2020, <https://www.pewresearch.org/2010/12/14/reagans-recession/>.

³² “President’s 2021 budget would cut food assistance for millions and radically restructure SNAP,” Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, accessed February 19, 2020, <https://cbpp.org/research/food-assistance>.

³³ Kelsy Dallas, “As religious practice declines, religious charities scramble for resources,” *Deseret Bee*, February 22, 2018, https://hoosiertimes.com/as-religious-practice-declines-religious-charities-scramble-for-resources/article_b2526634-f29f-53f7-842b-2eb7eb1dea8a.html.

many religious organizations began to expand their food pantries in anticipation of an increase among those experiencing food insecurity.

Other religious groups have had a long history of serving those who are impoverished or understood as lacking basic necessities. Benevolent organizations such as Jewish Family Services of Los Angeles (established in 1854), Catholic Charities, USA (established in 1910), and Lutheran Social Services of Southern California (established in 1944) were well emmeshed in their respective faith traditions. These are found largely in urban areas where poverty and inequities have been evident for generations. For example, Catholic Charities USA had its origins in the early 20th century, founded as the National Conference of Catholic Charities.³⁴ Following Vatican II, the organization retooled and widened its mission to include advocacy in addition to charitable efforts. Today the organization also supports disaster relief efforts, and it seeks to build relations with other organizations to promote engagement with local civic leaders and concerned neighbors addressing issues of hunger, poverty, and homelessness.

These larger organizations have supported multiple service points in local communities, including meeting housing needs, financial assistance, transportation fare, social work, health care, psychological support, and food pantries. They have a distinguished history of connecting not only with local congregations, but also of receiving corporate and civic support from the communities in which they are located.

Jewish Family Services, Catholic Charities and Lutheran Social Services

Among the food distribution sites that were surveyed for this project are SOVA of the Jewish Family Services, the Holy Family Service Center located at St. Charles Borromeo

³⁴ “About Us,” Catholic Charities USA, accessed July 25, 2020, <https://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/about-us/history/>.

Catholic Church, and Lutheran Social Services Care Center, North Hollywood. Each of these organizations offers a variety of services to the community around it. All services offered are based on need, not on religious affiliation. The Holy Family Service Center also provides showers, hot meals, and clothing to people experiencing homelessness.

For each of these service centers, a fairly lengthy intake interview is conducted before services are provided. Clients need to provide photo identification of each person living in a household, proof of residence (including a utility bill), and proof of income. Based on the information received, the agency will offer needed services. Food is just one of the possible services families or individuals may receive. These organizations require that clients live within a specific geographic area, and they are willing to make referrals to other agencies when appropriate.

Another pantry in this survey that is supported by Catholic Charities is Loaves and Fishes II located in Van Nuys. It is different from the Holy Family Service Center in that the only service they provide is food. The model under which the pantry operates is referred to as “Client Choice.” Food is sorted and placed on shelves where patrons are welcome to select the food items they prefer. Users are permitted to select from a variety of categories including grains, proteins, canned items, fruits and vegetables, and dairy (which includes milk and eggs). How much each client receives is based on the size of their family and bags provide enough food for three meals a day for a week. Consumers are permitted to return weekly, but according to Barbara Asburn, the director of Loaves and Fishes II, most clients come about every ten days.³⁵

Burbank Temporary Aid Center, Hope-NET, West Valley Food Pantry, and North Valley Caring Services

³⁵ Barbara Asburn, interview with author, July 10, 2020.

Several of the pantries visited are served by multiple congregations within their community. Some are operated by a consortium of churches while others are interfaith cooperatives. These congregations pool resources and volunteers to support the work they do. They also rely on grants and community partners, often local markets that will donate day-old bakery goods or produce that needs to be removed from the floor.

Included in this group is Burbank Temporary Aid, Hope-NET, West Valley Food Pantry, and North Valley Caring Services. Each of these has a slightly different way in which it relates to other congregations and how it is supported.

Like the service centers that are supported by denominationally based benevolent subsidies, Burbank Temporary Aid Center (BTAC) offers a variety of services. BTAC was established in 1974 as an outreach of the Burbank Ministerial Association and the Burbank Coordinating Council. It began operating from the founder's garage where food was distributed largely to an increasing homeless population; however, they soon recognized the growing numbers of the working poor and vulnerable seniors in the city of Burbank. BTAC was able to purchase storefront property which has been remodeled to be a two-story building with a warehouse on the ground floor and administrative offices upstairs. The facility also includes a client laundry room, shower facilities, mailboxes for those experiencing homelessness, and private interview rooms.

Barbara Howell is the Executive Officer.³⁶ She is also an LCSW and has served in this capacity for over 16 years. In the early days of BTAC, most of the food was provided by the various congregations that supported its work. Eventually BTAC partnered with the City of Burbank to receive funding from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and with Burbank Water and Power to assist clients with reduced utility rates,

³⁶ Barbara Howell, interview with author, July 15, 2020.

bill reductions, and a refrigerator exchange for low-income families. Due to BTAC's relationship with the City, all those who are served must be residents of Burbank.

Clients who have a residence must provide an identification for each person in their household, a bill from the Burbank Water and Power from that residence, and proof of income for those in the household. Once the intake is complete, sacks of food especially prepared for each family are offered.

Hope-NET, located in Los Angeles is a consortium of congregations that became aware of the need to offer food, shelter, and other services to the communities around them. It was established in 1988 and it serves people in the area that encompasses Koreatown, Hollywood, Los Feliz, and Silverlake. It began as a cluster of Christian congregations and has since expanded to include other religious groups.

The organization is funded largely by donations, but it also has partnership programs in the community, including local businesses, schools, and a variety of civic and religious organizations. Hope-NET may invite a school or other organization (markets, civic clubs, realtors, etc.) to "adopt" a pantry and donate non-perishable food items and money on a monthly basis. Hope-NET will suggest a "food of the month" that contributors are encouraged to provide. It also lists the local Los Angeles councilman as a supporter of their work.

There are twelve pantries that operate under the umbrella of Hope-NET – ten are in churches, one is in a synagogue, and one is located at the Islamic Center of Los Angeles. Each of the distribution sites offer its own days and hours of operation, and the locations can be found on the Hope-NET website. Many of them are open once a week, others once or twice a month, and two of them have suspended operation during the pandemic. Aside from an Executive Director of the agency who is paid, all the pantries are operated by volunteers.

North Valley Caring Services (NVCS) is located in North Hills and offers a range of services to the largely Hispanic community in which it is located, including a pre-school, a childcare facility, thrift shop, ESL classes, immigration services, and offers a program to help women establish micro-businesses.

According to Rev. Manny Flores, the Executive Director of NVCS, the agency receives food from the Valley Food Bank, which is an arm of the Rescue Mission Alliance, a Christian organization.³⁷ They also receive food from the LARFB, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Farm to Families. Farm to Families is a direct distributor of produce and other products grown or raised by California farmers and ranchers in an effort to eliminate food waste in the state.³⁸ NVCS also purchases food in bulk at discounted prices through Costco and food is delivered to the distribution site due to the large quantity of items purchased.

The West Valley Food Pantry (WVFP) was established in 1975 at the Prince of Peace Episcopal Church in Woodland Hills.³⁹ In 1985, West Valley also began providing food to the Family Rescue Center, an outreach of a local Spanish-speaking community center located at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church of Canoga Park, and to One Generation which provides food to home-bound seniors. This food pantry is well known in the areas and has the support of its local congressman and city council member and has developed relationships with many local businesses and grocery stores. It receives food from LARFB who has also supplied them with a 20-foot truck for picking up food. They have received grants from grocery outlets including Trader Joe's, Vons/Pavilions, Smart & Final, Albertsons, Gelsons, Ralphs, Amazon Fresh, and Sprouts. It also relies on fundraisers and food drives from organizations and businesses such as the Girl Scouts/Boy Scouts and the Rotary Club. And there are other

³⁷ Manny Flores, interview with author, July 15, 2020.

³⁸ "Farm to Families," California Food Banks, accessed August 10, 2020, <http://www.cafoodbanks.org/farm-family>.

³⁹ Debbie Decker, interview with author, July 7, 2020.

congregations in the area that now offer donations, including seven other churches, a Jewish temple, two mosques, and a Sikh Gurdwara.

Clients of the WVFP must provide two pieces of identification and a record of their address. This information is input to a computer. Clients may come once a month to receive food. Each client receives a box of produce, another that contains dairy products, and a third box of dry goods.

On Monday mornings a shower truck comes to the facility that can accommodate between 30 to 50 homeless clients each day. They also have a social worker, a nurse practitioner, and someone from the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) to resource additional services. WVFP also delivers meals to ten low-income senior apartment buildings. These meals are prepared in the kitchen at Prince of Peace church.

Fetty Food Pantry, NoHo Home Alliance, Khalsa Care Foundation, and Hollywood Food Coalition

A much smaller but still well-known pantry in their community is the Fetty Food Pantry located at Church of Valley in Van Nuys. Susan Syers has been the director of this pantry for 12 years.⁴⁰ She and all the staff are volunteers. Originally established in 2000, the pantry is in an area that is visibly impoverished with many homeless people in the neighborhood. The pantry's efforts began with a core group of volunteers making sack lunches to give to people in the community and canned food and other dry goods that have been donated by church members. The food was set up on tables in the church Parlor and people were welcome to choose the foods that they needed or that appealed to them.

In 2008 the pantry established a relationship with the LARFB, and through a program called "Extra Helpings" it received a free refrigerator, and it was connected to local Food for Less and Target stores. These stores deliver frozen food to the pantry weekly, and the pantry

⁴⁰ Susan Syers, interview with author, September 5, 2020.

is required to take what is donated or risk losing this source of support. Fetty must order from the LARFB at least every two months, while dry goods, like rice, beans, and canned items continue to be donated by church members or others from the community.

Fetty uses a “client choice” model for food distribution. Consumers enter the building via a specially marked entrance. Based on the number of people in the household, clients select dry goods from stocked shelves, and they also receive items such as frozen foods (for example, chicken, a roast, ground turkey, and perhaps a frozen pizza), and dairy products like milk, yogurt, and eggs.

Records are maintained using a system of 5 x 7 cards that are kept in a file. Patrons are welcome to come every other week, and the pantry serves approximately 200 families a month. It does not reach out to the homeless community but will not turn anyone one away either.

The NoHo Home Alliance offers its services principally to the homeless. It is located at St. Matthews Lutheran Church and is an outreach of that faith community. Offering showers, hot meals, sack lunches, clothing, mailboxes, and some social support services to those experiencing homelessness, it began its work five years ago when Rev. Stephanie Jaeger became the Rector.⁴¹ It is open two days a week and simply opens the doors of the building to clients who wish to use their services. A hot meal is served in the Social Hall while a large screen television plays a movie. Clients are welcome to relax, charge their cell phones, and take a shower if they request it. Mailboxes are provided for those who receive general relief or social security/disability checks.

⁴¹ Stephanie Jaeger, interview with author, January 15, 2020.

An intake representative from LAHSA, known as a “navigator,” is present to input personal information into a computer to determine if clients are eligible for additional benefits, including locating permanent housing and health care.

NoHo Home Alliance has become very involved in advocacy for the homeless population of this community. There is an increasing number of people experiencing food insecurity due, for example, to the rising cost of housing and health care without a commensurate rise in income. In the East San Fernando Valley, the number of people experiencing homelessness is high, with an estimate that there are 1,653 people without housing.⁴²

The Khalsa Care Foundation (KCF) is located at the Sikh Gurdwara of Pacoima. Jaspreet Singh is the director of the food distribution services.⁴³ He explained that *seva*, selfless service and hospitality is foundational to the practice and teachings of Sikhism. Each gurdwara, or temple, offers community outreach in the way of feeding people. The menu is entirely vegetarian.

The KCF serves food in two different forms. Hot meals, known as *langar*, are prepared each Wednesday, and served as a sit-down meal, from 8:00 am to 10:15 am. A food pantry is open on Fridays from 4:30 pm to 6:00 pm for the distribution of food boxes. The food preparation and distribution are accomplished with an all-volunteer force.

Finally, the Hollywood Food Coalition offers both hot meals and food to go, largely offered to the homeless community in Hollywood. It also serves people who are homebound. Most of the food that is prepared for distribution comes from the catering industry related to film and television production in Los Angeles. The Coalition relies on donations from catering trucks and studios to prepare meals. It is open seven days a week, 52 weeks a year

⁴² “Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count 2019 – Council District 2,” Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, accessed January 29, 2020, <http://lahsa.org>.

⁴³ Jaspreet Singh, interview with author, August 19, 2020.

and prides itself on always being open and willing to serve the homeless community in Hollywood.

Los Angeles Regional Food Bank

This chapter cannot be concluded without discussing the importance of the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank. Every organization that was researched has a relationship with the LARFB, and the website for the Food Bank includes the listing of all of the local community food pantries in the greater Los Angeles area that are supported by this larger organization. The principle of “food banking” was established in the 1970s by a retired businessman in Phoenix. John van Hengel was struck by the amount of food waste that was occurring in his community and developed a means by which otherwise discarded food could be gathered in one place and distributed to local venues for distribution. What began as St. Mary’s Food Bank in Phoenix is now a network of over 200 food banks across the nation that serves 40 million people who are at risk of food insecurity. This organization has gone by several names including Second Harvest, America’s Second Harvest, and now Feeding America.⁴⁴

The Los Angeles Regional Food Bank is supported by donations, corporate sponsors, and local organizations such as the Los Angeles Rams. It relies on hundreds of volunteers and offers education on food insecurity and nutrition for the Los Angeles area.

The information outlined in this chapter was obtained by asking questions that are included in Part A of the survey conducted by the author. All of the pantries rely heavily on a volunteer pool of labor. The organizations that offer multiple service points have paid staff that are largely responsible for administrative requirements and social services. Part B of the survey will be covered in the next chapter. It discusses changes that were made in the face of

⁴⁴ “About Us,” Feeding America, accessed June 30, 2020, <https://www.feedingamerica.org/about-us/our-history>.

the pandemic and the orders to remain “safer-at-home” on behalf of the State of California and uses Heifetz’s model of adaptive leadership to consider their ability to “thrive” during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chapter 5

Adaptations During the Pandemic

According to Heifetz, successful adaptation to change for any business or nonprofit organization relies on several specific abilities of that organization. These include:

- 1) Possessing a clear sense of the purpose and values of the organization;
- 2) Taking the best practices of the past and making changes based on what is working well and considering what no longer serves;
- 3) Benefiting from being able to experiment and improvise;
- 4) Creating new arrangements that allow for creativity and diversity; and
- 5) Understanding that adaptation takes time and persistence.⁴⁵

Change is inevitable and organizations will encounter shifts that will impact what they do and how they accomplish their mission and vision. Some of these variables may be completely outside the control of organization while others may mean making planned adjustments.

Beginning March 16, 2020 residents of Southern California have been asked to observe “safer-at-home” restrictions for living and working. Restaurants, movie theaters, concert venues, hotels, shopping malls, hair salons, churches, and all religious gatherings have been closed. With the onset of the pandemic, the adjustments that occurred for businesses, governments, and individuals were drastic and unplanned. No one anticipated a pandemic and the resulting economic and employment devastation that would occur. The increased need for food is projected to continue for many months, and possibly years to come.⁴⁶ With the pandemic there arose the need to provide food for increasing numbers of

⁴⁵ Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, 35.

⁴⁶ Maya L. Kapoor, “The pandemic hunger crisis is only just getting started,” *The Atlantic*, June 14, 2020, <https://theatlantic.com/health/archive/2020/06/pandemic-food-banks-hunger/613036>.

people. Many local community-based food pantries were able to meet this need. Others closed their doors.

Part B of Pantry Survey – Adaptive Changes

Twelve providers of food in communities on the edge of food insecurity were surveyed to learn how they were undertaking the work of feeding others. They were asked about their operating procedures under typical circumstances. But each of these food pantries or service organizations needed to make swift and significant changes in the early days and weeks of the pandemic.

The areas that needed to be quickly resolved to continue their mission included:

- 1) Dramatic rise in the number of clients seeking food assistance.
- 2) Loss of volunteer support.
- 3) Disruption of food supply chain.
- 4) Drop in financial resources.
- 5) Increased need for warehousing products, and
- 6) Need to protect the health of clients and volunteers.

Many of the food pantries surveyed were successful in making swift adjustments as they were already meeting the criteria set forth by the adaptive leadership model outlined by Heifetz. As these pantries were assessed, questions were asked not only about what and how changes were made, but the author also sought to understand the heart of the work being done – that people care.

Possess a Clear Sense of Mission and Values

Heifetz begins by saying that it is important for a nonprofit to connect clearly to the purpose of the organization as this provides the basic DNA of the organization. All twelve of the organizations surveyed for this study have their Mission statement posted clearly on their websites. Some of these are as simple as “To provide food to our neighbors in need” (Fetty

Food Pantry)⁴⁷ to more involved statements such as “To help families in need decrease the stress of obtaining groceries and providing food for their loved ones” (Khalsa Care Foundation).⁴⁸ Another organization offering a very comprehensive Mission statement is SOVA. It reads, “We provide life-improving services that help the people of Los Angeles live with dignity and exercise self-determination. We believe in and strive for a more compassionate Los Angeles where no one has to navigate life alone.”⁴⁹

Each of these food providers is a faith-based organization and its mission is rooted in the faith perspective from which it comes. The Khalsa Care Foundation, which is housed in the Sikh Gurdwara of Pacoima, makes clear that community outreach is foundational to Sikh teachings and tradition. *Seva* is selfless service, often expressed as hospitality and providing food to others, without charge. Hot meals that are served are vegetarian. The reason for this is that *langar* is open to everyone who comes to eat, and there are those who have dietary taboos as part of their own traditions. To exclude anyone from the table is forbidden.

What is noteworthy about each of these service providers is that although each is run by a faith-based group, their mission statements make clear that people will not be denied services on the basis of religious preference. The aim of each of these organizations is to practice compassion, honor the dignity of clients, and serve its neighbors. These practices are consistent with the “Golden Rule” of which some variation can be found in the sacred texts of nearly every religious tradition.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ “Fetty Food Pantry,” Church of the Valley, accessed September 15, 2020, www.covtoday.org/fetty-food-pantry.

⁴⁸ “Community Outreach,” Khalsa Care Foundation, accessed August 1, 2020, khalsacarefoundation.com/community-outreach.

⁴⁹ “SOVA – Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles,” Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles, accessed July 10, 2020, jfsla.org/about-us/mission-values.

⁵⁰ David C. Lundberg, *Unifying Truths of the World’s Religions* (New Fairfield, CT: Heavenlight Press, 2010), 237-239.

It is clear that each of the food pantries included in this study is grounded in the faith tradition it represents, nurtured by the essential DNA of its values. This is not only the foundation from which their work springs, but it also becomes the force that drives them to grow and meet the challenges that the pandemic forced upon them. They were forced to make changes in response to COVID-19 and not give up on their call to serve. To reiterate the words of Heifetz, “You make a statement about what you are willing to die for, and, therefore, what you are willing to live for.”⁵¹

Best Practices and Making Changes

“Successful adaptive change builds on the past rather than jettison it.”⁵² When the work of an organization is built upon the foundation of commitment to a solid understanding of mission, vision, and values, it will seek to make use of previous wisdom and know-how. These values will sustain the work of compassion even when change is required to meet emerging circumstances.

For most of the pantries surveyed, there was a history of between 20 to over 30 years of experience in providing food or other services to the communities in which they are located. Some organizations have much longer histories, such as Jewish Family Services of Los Angeles (JFS) which has been in existence for 150 years. Though the location in the San Fernando Valley is newer than locations in Los Angeles, the expertise and centralization of its administration allows JFS to expand and share resources of finances, staff, and programming. As technical problems arise, the organization has the capacity to solve them as these are in the skill set of the organization’s leaders.

⁵¹ Heifetz, *Practice of Adaptive Leadership*, 39.

⁵² Based on the work of Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky, “Becoming an Adaptive Leader,” *Lifelong Faith Journal*, V. 5.1 (Spring 2011): 26. <https://lifelongfaith.com/lifelong-faith-journal.html>.

With regard to changes that needed to be made in light of the pandemic, for the agencies that provided multiple services to the community, some services were temporarily halted so that the immediate needs of the food insecure could be met. This allowed them to focus their efforts and their finances on the most critical situation before them – feeding people. The following agencies temporarily halted some programs such as offering showers and laundry services to the homeless:

- Burbank Temporary Aid Center
- Holy Family Service Center
- NoHo Home Alliance
- West Valley Food Pantry

They continued to provide hygiene kits, and of course, food. Part of their decision to limit services was due to restrictions to limit the spread of the coronavirus and limitations caused by a dip in financial resources, loss of volunteer support, and an increased need in the community for food as many people were suddenly unemployed. Resources of money, labor, and planning were concentrated at the point of providing food. Local pantries needed to make quick adjustments.

Perhaps the most immediate change caused by stay-at-home restrictions are those that prohibit people from gathering indoors. The NoHo Home Alliance opened its Social Hall to homeless members of the community for a hot sit-down meal and offered a sense of community as people just gathered to watch television together, eat, charge their cell phones, and check their mailboxes. The Rev. Stephanie Jaeger shared some of her frustration when she expressed,

I was forced to stop all that. No more showers either, and the guys really liked taking hot showers. We still make hot meals. In fact, I just got a grant to remodel the church kitchen so we can prepare more food. But we serve the

meals in clamshell containers and ask them not to hang around the grounds. I hate that part of it. And I hate all the extra trash and recycling it generates.⁵³

The West Valley Food Pantry (WVFP) experienced a sharp increase in the number of food pantry clients at the beginning of the pandemic. Debbie Decker also noted a decline in online financial donations. In 2019 WVFP served slightly more than 3,000 individuals a month. In June of 2020 alone Debbie estimated they had served 50% more people, or approximately 4,500 meals. Debbie said,

With this many cars driving through the parking lot, we couldn't have homeless people walking through – it wasn't safe. We couldn't have the shower trucks parked in the lot because there isn't space. Our online donations dropped, but fortunately we received help from the National Charity League and I learned that Smart 'N Final has a Foundation. The manager told me about this because we already buy a lot of bulk items there.⁵⁴

Among the most significant challenges for food pantries was the loss of volunteer help. As most of these pantries are located in houses of worship and supported by congregation members, it is understandable that many of these volunteers are also retirement age. The “safer-at-home” policy of the State of California recommended that all persons over the age of 65 remain at home as they are considered uniquely vulnerable to the coronavirus. Barbara Howell, Executive Director of BTAC reported,

We went from a volunteer base of 80 to 18 overnight. Nearly everyone that worked here was over 65 years old and retired. Suddenly, they were asked to stay home and stay safe. But it wasn't all bad. We were forced to make some changes that I had wanted to do for a while. Instead of file cards for each of

⁵³ Jaeger, interview, June 20, 2020.

⁵⁴ Debbie Decker, interview with author, July 7, 2020.

the clients, I was able to computerize all our data. The older volunteers were not comfortable with using computers. Initially, it made more work for me, but in the long run this has forced us to enter the modern age.⁵⁵

The lack of volunteer support has forced at least the temporary closure of more than one of the smaller food pantries, including two pantries that are part of the Hope-NET coalition. These are the pantries located at First Baptist Church and First Church of the Nazarene, both in Los Angeles.

The Fetty Food Pantry was closed between March 16th and the beginning of June, in part due to loss of volunteers. The other challenge Fetty faces is the model under which it has historically operated. Using the system referred to as “client choice,” consumers enter the church parlor and “shop” for the items they prefer. A small pantry room is stocked with canned goods, and another space lays out items such as milk and eggs, rice, beans, and additional food items that have been donated. COVID restrictions forced the pantry to prohibit clients from entering the parlor and the pantry to maintain safety protocols. The building and parking lot is not designed so that clients would be able to drive through to receive food, and the shortage of volunteers meant that volunteers were unable to deliver sacks of food directly to client vehicles. Fetty was unable to meet the adaptive challenges it encountered given the above limitations and closed its doors for two-and-a-half months. Director Susan Syers said,

We had to reopen in July or else we would lose support from the “Extra Helpings” program. If we don’t open back up, we won’t get free items from Target or Food for Less, and we can’t afford to buy a lot of stuff. Our folks like getting eggs and milk. Sometimes we end up with 60 frozen pizzas from

⁵⁵ Howell, interview.

Target, but people like that too. Other stuff like the rice and beans, come from church members. We really rely on the LA Regional Food Bank.⁵⁶

In July, Fetty was able to reopen with four volunteers. As many of the city's COVID restrictions were being lifted, Syers consulted with the minister at Church of the Valley and it was decided that with appropriate precautions, they could reopen with a "partial choice" model of food distribution. Dry goods would be pre-packed in grocery bags, and so too, the refrigerated and frozen items. The clients would enter the parlor, be temperature screened, and sign a waiver that they were healthy. As they maintained a six-foot distance between consumers, clients would collect a sack of dry goods, a sack of dairy and refrigerated items, and a final sack of frozen items. This system worked during the summer months, but with the autumn there was an increased rate of COVID infection, and once again restrictions were put into place about people gathering in indoor spaces. The Fetty pantry has closed its doors again.

Improvising

My favorite example of an organization being able to improvise comes from the North Valley Caring Center (NVCC). Located on the campus of a Methodist church, the Center has many aspects to its ministry, including providing safe, overnight parking for folks living in their vehicles, a refugee center, a thrift shop, day care, after-school tutoring, job training, and, of course, food distribution to the food insecure and those experiencing homelessness.

Manny Flores is the Executive Director of NVCC which has five employees in total. The Center is located in a largely Latino community and has developed a relationship with the local police precinct captain to maintain the security of the well-used campus. At the beginning of the pandemic, many parts of its program needed to close, including the childcare

⁵⁶ Syers, interview.

center, the thrift shop, and job training programs. The need for food for the community jumped 300% in a matter of a few weeks as many in the community lost jobs. The food pantry already had relationships with the LARFB, Costco, and received USDA food boxes. Now that the pantry needed to increase the amount of food it received storage became a big issue. Things like milk and eggs, and some produce needed to be refrigerated. They did not have a large enough refrigeration unit to accommodate the additional food supplied. Manny Flores was excited to share some of the adaptations NVCS had made,

Let me show you the White Unicorn. I call it that because it is one of a kind. You will never see anything like it anywhere, because we made it up. We built it! A client that is a truck driver said he knew where we could get a refrigeration truck trailer. The refrigeration doesn't work, but we could get the trailer really cheap. We pulled it up here next to the Social Hall and bought a window air-conditioning unit at Home Depot and installed it in the trailer, along with a fan to move the air around. It's plugged into the Social Hall, and as long as we keep the doors closed when we don't have to be in there, it stays cold enough to keep the eggs and milk safe. I am so proud of this thing!⁵⁷

The ability to experiment and to improvise is important when companies are making adaptive changes. Sometimes the experiments are not successful, like the Fetty Food Pantry that was not able to make sustainable change. But organizations need to be willing to try new things until they find a sustainable path forward that leads to success. Experimentation can buy time and resources as people put their minds together to bring about lasting variations that create a vital ministry.

New Arrangements that are Creative and Diverse

⁵⁷ Manny Flores, interview with author, July 16, 2020.

The ability to offer multiple responses to a variety of circumstances can enable an organization to respond to disequilibrium effectively. This allows for flexibility and responsiveness during challenging times. Adaptation relies on diversity. By diversifying the gene pool, nature markedly increases the odds that some members of the species will have the ability to survive in a changing ecosystem. The secret of evolution is variation, which in organizational terms could be called distributed or collective intelligence.⁵⁸

As systems develop the ability to adapt, they learn to rearrange old DNA. The basic DNA remains intact – the mission and purposed of the agency is front and center, for this is essential to continue the work they were made to perform. When challenges arise, new arrangements of those building blocks allow the organization to continue its work in creative and expanded ways.

The Hollywood Food Coalition offers an excellent perspective on what this may look like. The Food Coalition originated as a soup kitchen, offering hot meals to people experiencing homelessness in Hollywood. It relied heavily on caterers and food trucks to provide excess food that had been purchased and donated to the Coalition. Most of these caterers were related to the film and television industry as they provided excellent meals to cast and crew members that were shooting on location throughout the Los Angeles area. When “safer-at-home” orders came down from the State of California, nearly all production in Los Angeles was halted. The caterers were no longer working, and thus the Hollywood Food Coalition lost its primary source of donations.

In addition, the Coalition needed to refrain from offering sit-down meals to its consumers. It needed to shift how it served food as well as the sourcing of the food that was offered. Initially, this resulted in an increased need to purchase food which meant it was

⁵⁸ Heifetz, *Becoming an Adaptive Leader*, 27.

necessarily to solicit more donations of both food products and money. Meals were still prepared in its kitchen, but they were distributed in clamshell containers.

As it was clear that an increased number of people were struggling with food insecurity, the Coalition sought to enlarge the work they were doing. Sherry Bonanno, the Executive Director for the Coalition wrote and received grants from Cedars-Sinai Medical System and the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce that enabled it to create a community exchange program. The program works with private, business, and community donors to create a one-time or recurring food donation. The Coalition entered into an arrangement with the Hollywood First United Methodist Church whereby the church has donated space to create a warehouse and distribution center. Food items are received and then shared with 49 different local nonprofit organizations.

In the words of Cathy A., a volunteer with the Coalition;

I don't know exactly how the connections are made, but I will go to someone's home who has made a bunch of sack lunches. The lunches are in boxes on the front porch of the home. I pick up the boxes and take them to the Methodist Church. I don't actually see or talk to anyone. It is all very safe and contactless, so I feel okay about doing something good that helps others. It's not much, but it is something I can do that makes a difference. And everyone is safe from the virus.⁵⁹

This is a means of diversifying food distribution that involves the whole community. It is an entirely new model for the Hollywood Food Coalition, and it allows them to continue to provide meals to the homeless population and has expanded the work they do to include others who may be experiencing food insecurity.

⁵⁹ Cathy A., interview with author, November 21, 2020.

Another organization that was able to expand its work in a unique way is the Khalsa Care Foundation. Jaspreet Singh and a volunteer, Jita, with the Khalsa Care kitchen crew were happy to share information about the increased number of meals they were able to provide the community. Prior to the COVID disruption and the increased rise in unemployment in their community, Khalsa Care served approximately 75-100 families each week. Within a few weeks that number had risen to about 550 families a week. Khalsa Care received a grant from the Los Angeles Department of Disability (DOD) through the assistance of its City Council Representative, Monica Rodriguez. This allowed them to also offer hot meals to elderly adults who are residents of low-income housing in the neighborhood. Volunteers also began to provide hot meals to the nursing staff at a local hospital and to a local homeless shelter. At its peak, Khalsa Care delivered 3,000 meals a day, Monday through Friday to the disabled and hospital staff.

At the time of this writing, Khalsa Care's grant from the DOD had been used up. Khalsa is awaiting additional funding from the office of the Mayor of Los Angeles. Everyone at the Khalsa Care Foundation is volunteer. There is no paid staff.

Adaptation Takes Time and Persistence

In biological systems, the capacity for adaptation will allow a species to thrive over thousands and even millions of years. In an organization, it takes time to cement adaptations into new sets of norms and processes. It requires the persistence of the leaders and those in decision-making positions to continue to offer incremental changes and allow new norms to become established and build over time. Business cultures change slowly, and sometimes people in leadership can take a lot of heat from others who resist making changes.

All of the food pantries that were surveyed for this research were able to make adaptations quickly. Those that were unable to do so, closed their doors. Many of these were due to a lack of volunteer support as many of those volunteers were asked to remain safer-at-

home. For those that continued to do the work of offering food to their respective communities, significant changes needed to be made.

Nearly universal among these pantries was a shift in *how* food was distributed. Due to the requirement to protect consumers and volunteers, many pantries began to limit close contact with the community. Food was distributed using a drive-through model. Drivers were asked to open the trunk of their cars or open a back door to their vehicles and sacks of food were placed in the car. There was no physical contact between the parties.

Barbara Howell of BTAC is anticipating resistance to some of the change that needed to be made at the beginning of the pandemic, and that will remain in place when things begin to return to “normal.”

I don't think we will ever go back to having people enter the building. This way of doing the work is so much faster and more efficient. Some of the volunteers don't like it as we don't get to interact as much with the clients. They like sitting a chatting with people. And it is nice to get to know people, but this is a much better way of doing the work. It is way more efficient. We won't go back to have them come inside to do all this paperwork. It will be a big change when the old volunteers return.⁶⁰

Among the changes Barbara made was conducting food distribution using a drive-through model and keeping all client records in a computer database. These changes have made processing more efficient for both the consumer and the volunteer staff. As things begin to shift as the impact of the pandemic lessens, Barbara expects that other services will resume which will entail clients entering the building for interviews. Having the ability to have computer records will shorten the time being spent with clients as their history will be available immediately. Over time, these culture-shaping efforts will strengthen the

⁶⁰ Howell, interview.

organization's adaptive capacity as it fosters new norms that will enable it to meet challenges as they arise.

Change is inevitable and organizations will encounter shifts that will impact what they do and how they accomplish their mission and vision. Some of these variables may be completely outside the control of organization while others may mean making planned adjustments. The characteristics of possessing a clear sense of purpose and values; taking the best practices of the past and making changes based on what is working well and dispensing with those practices that are no longer helpful; being able to experiment and improvise; creating new arrangements that allow for creativity and diversity; and, understanding that adaptation takes time and persistence will allow organizations to tackle tough challenges and thrive. This chapter provides some examples of how faith-based food pantries have been able to meet challenges offered by extreme circumstances of food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic and thrive.

Conclusion

As the COVID-19 pandemic nears the one-year mark, unemployment continues to hover near 11% in the greater Los Angeles area.⁶¹ This is down from 20% recorded in May 2020, signaling good news to the business community. However, many still face food insecurity as this extended period of low-wages, or no wages has led them to rely on local food pantries to meet their needs. Many of these food pantries are supported by faith-based communities that have served their neighbors for decades. The pandemic forced some of these pantries to make rapid and significant changes in the amount of food they shared and the methods by which the food was distributed.

The purpose of this project is to identify the characteristics of food pantries that were able to successfully respond to the food crisis during the pandemic. These pantries were examined through the lens of Adaptive Leadership principles as described by Ronald Heifetz. Many local food pantries in the San Fernando Valley were able to make quick adjustments with regard to their volunteer base, their sources of funding, acquisition of food, and changes they were required to make in the distribution of food as they safely continued to serve their neighbors.

The Adaptive Leadership paradigm has been in use for slightly more than a decade and it is increasingly being used to address a variety of business applications, including its use with large and small businesses, nonprofits, and even congregational boards and organizational structures. Eryn Brown in The *Los Angeles Times* Business Section (February 7, 2020) featured an article that highlighted the success of local businesses that were able to

⁶¹ Howard Fine, "L.A. County Unemployment Rate Falls to 11% in November," *Los Angeles Business Journal*, (December 20, 2020,) <https://labusinessjournal.com/news/2020/dec/20/l-county-unemployment-rate-fell-11-november-amid-s/#:~:text=The%20EDD%20call%20center%20in,18>.

make quick adaptations during the pandemic. Brown described modifications made by an independently owned Taqueria that enabled the business to do well over the last 10 months:

Herrera, for example, used to teach a Christmastime tamale-making class at Yuca's. She moved the lesson online and enrolled 40 people from as far away as Mexico, New York, and London. She's planning another online cooking event that should also attract new customers, and in the meantime relies mostly on takeout orders like many restaurants.⁶²

Aided by the use of the internet this small business has been able to grow in unexpected ways.

Another example of utilizing the Adaptive Leadership model appears in materials offered by Lifelong Faith Associates, an organization that offers materials for intergenerational faith formation. A journal article published by Lifelong Faith titled "Becoming an Adaptive and Innovative Leader based on the work of Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky," the same principles presented in this paper are used to address congregational administration. The article encourages clergy, board chairs, and department heads to follow an administrative model that allows for flexibility and adaptive change.⁶³ These principles include possessing a clear sense of the values and mission of the organization; taking the best practices of the past and making changes based on what works well, and what no longer serves; benefiting from experimentation and being able to improvise; creating new arrangements that allow for creativity and diversity; and understanding that adaptation takes time and patience. Many of the food pantries examined in this paper have been able to meet the principles laid out by Heifetz in their structure and organization.

⁶² Eryn Brown, "Quick and nimble mom-and-pops: the pandemic forced small businesses to adapt on the fly, and the winners are emerging," *Los Angeles Times*, February 7, 2021. <https://enewspaper.latimes.com/infinity/latimes/default.aspx?pubid=50435180-e48b5>.

⁶³ Heifetz and Linsky, "Becoming an Adaptive Leader," 26.

Following the principle of utilizing the best practices of the organization and making changes based on immediate needs, Burbank Temporary Aid Center, Lutheran Social Services of Southern California, and SOVA (Jewish Family Services) temporarily halted some of the services offered in order to focus on the increased need for food. They are beginning to resume other services as each of these bodies has been able to meet the food needs of the community. A shifting of focus and energies allowed each to address the increased demand for food resources without losing sight of its sense of mission and values.

An example of being able to improvise with what is available is North Valley Caring Services and its invention of “the White Unicorn.” NVCC was able to increase donations and food purchases to meet the need of those coming to receive food. What it lacked was sufficient refrigeration for perishable goods. The combined efforts of administrative leaders, volunteers, and pantry clients enabled it to create additional cold space through the use of easily acquired materials. As Executive Director Manny Flores said about their improvised refrigeration unit, “You won’t see anything like this anywhere.”

The Hollywood Food Coalition was able to create an entirely new arrangement that not only retooled its method of food distribution but engaged a new model of serving its community. The creativity of the leadership and volunteers led to a broader system of serving the Hollywood community. By the establishment of a community exchange program, other organizations and food pantries within the area also benefitted. It is supported by a broad base of local businesses, community donors, and a local congregation.

Some less well organized, less flexible, or under-staffed pantries faced challenges that were more difficult to surmount. For example, the Fetty Food Pantry was forced to close for a few months at the beginning of the pandemic. The loss of volunteer support and the inability to alter its method of food distribution prevented it from effectively continuing to operate. Eventually the pantry reopened with some modifications, but as the pandemic continued to

get worse, it closed again. The pantries at the First Baptist Church and Church of the Nazarene, both of Los Angeles, stopped distributing food at the beginning of the pandemic and have not reopened. For both of these, an aging volunteer base prevents them from apportioning food during the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are many other faith-based food pantries that operate in the San Fernando Valley. Among these is the North Hollywood Interfaith Food Pantry (NHIFP) established over 37 years ago. I serve as the Chair of the Executive Board for this organization and my commitment to leading this interfaith effort to care for those experiencing food insecurity is important to me. Throughout the length of the COVID-19 pandemic, I have sought to work closely with the pantry Director, Barbara Javitz, and I have found the principles outlined by Heifetz to be helpful in guiding us at this time.

The NHIFP struggled with many of the same obstacles other pantries needed to address including issues related to food sourcing, an initial drop in donations, loss of volunteers due to safer-at-home orders, an increased number of clients, and the need to practice physical distancing to ensure the safety of the volunteers and clients. In the first weeks of the pandemic the client load rose by approximately 40%. There were many phone calls made to the participating congregations that support the pantry seeking additional volunteers as nearly all of the regular volunteers were of long-standing and over the age of 65.

After the initial trauma of the sudden closing of many businesses and the sudden rise in unemployment figures, there was much news coverage of the long lines at food distribution sites. This assisted in raising the awareness of the general public to the need in their communities, and there was a subsequent rise in donations of food items and of money. The use of social media and the communication network between the participating congregations allowed the NHIFP to continue its work without interruption.

I do not know if any of the food pantries that were studied for this project are aware of Heifetz's Adaptive Leadership paradigm. Yet, I see this an invaluable resource that may be used to evaluate and organize - or reorganize - nonprofits like local food pantries. It is imperative that compassionate ministries such as faith-based food pantries or services provided to those experiencing homelessness, remain flexible and dynamic, able to quickly re-orient during times of sudden crisis, and most importantly be firmly grounded in a sense its of mission and values.

APPENDIX A

Interview Questions for Research

“How We Serve: An Examination of Faith-based Food Pantries During the COVID-19 Pandemic”

Rev. Louise Sloan Goben

Name of Organization _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Name of Contact _____

Part A

Organizational information:

1. **Name and title of person** providing information:
2. How long has organization been in operation? How and why was it established?
3. Is there a Mission Statement? Values Statement?
4. Who supports the organization? (This may be financial or volunteer support)
5. What are sources of funding? (i.e., grants, donations and/or government support?)
6. How is the org. structured? All volunteer? Paid positions? Boards?

Do they have their own 501c3, or are they under the auspices of an umbrella org?

Operations:

1. Operating hours?
2. How is food distributed?
3. How is food stored?
4. Is this volunteer labor, or are people paid to do this work?

Clients:

1. Who receives food? (Individuals, families, seniors, homeless, etc.)
2. Are there restrictions or limits on how frequently people receive assistance?

Other Assistance:

In addition to food, is other assistance offered? (i.e., health care, housing, hot meals, mental health referrals, bridge housing, etc.)

Other information and statistics

- How many people are served weekly, monthly?

Part B**What changes have occurred considering the COVID-19 Pandemic?**

- Volunteer Support
- Funding
- Number of clients
- Food acquisition
- Food storage
- Food distribution

Any additional information the organization would like to provide?

APPENDIX B

Pantry Name	Days	Hours
Burbank Temporary Aid Center, Burbank	T - W - Th	9:00am-12:00pm
Homeless Services	M & F	9:00am - 12:00pm
Fetty Food Pantry, Van Nuys	Temp closed	
Khalsa Care Foundation, Pacoima	F	4:30 pm - 6:00pm
Hot Meals	W	8:00am - 10:15am
Hollywood Food Coalition, Hollywood	Daily	6:30pm - 8:00pm
Hope-NET, Los Angles		
Blessed Sacrament	Sat.	9:00am - 12:00pm
First Baptist Church	Temp closed	
First Church of Nazarene	Temp closed	
First Unitarian Church	Sat	8:00am - 10:00 am
Immanuel Pres. Church	M - W - F	8:00 am - 1:00 pm
	Sat.	8:00 am - 10:30am
Islamic Center of So Cal	Sat	10:00am 12:00pm
The Karsh Center	Sun.	7:30am - 9:30am
Founders MCC	Sat.	8:30am - 10:15am
Silverlake Comm. Church	W	5:00pm - 6:15pm
St. James Epis. Church	Th	8:00am - 9:00am
St. John's Cathedral	1st & 3rd Sun.	8:30am - 10:30am
Wilshire Pres. Church	M	10:30am-12:00pm
Lutheran Social Services, No. Holly.	T & F	10:00am - 1:30pm
NoHo Home Alliance, No. Holly.	M & W	8:30am - 12:00pm

Loaves & Fishes II, Van Nuys	M & W	10:00 am 12:30 pm
SOVA - JFS, Van Nuys	Sun.	9:00am - 12:00pm
	M - Th	10:00am - 1:30pm
St. Charles Cath. Church	Sun.	9:00am - 1:00pm
	T - W - Th	9:00am - 11:45am
	Sat	9:00am - 1:00pm
North Valley Caring Services, Pacoima	Th - F	8:45am - 1:00pm
West Valley Food Pantry,	M & Th	9:30am - 2:00pm
Woodland Hills	F	9:30am -12:00pm

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